

Medication Factsheet



Having your prescription medications available during the time of an emergency may save your life, and may make coping with the crisis easier.

With insurance regulations, and the high cost of many medications, having a large surplus on hand may be difficult. Both FEMA and the American Red Cross recommend that people prepare an emergency kit to provide basic needs for a three day period. This kit can be used if you shelter-in-place or have to evacuate.

If you take prescription medications they need to be part of your kit! They can however be kept with your medications, but be in a box or bag so they can rapidly be placed with your other emergency supplies.

Don't forget any special situations such as medications needing refrigeration (place in a small cooler with ice) and items such as breathing treatment machines, syringes or blood sugar testing supplies.

If possible you may want to keep a larger supply on hand. Pharmacies, stores, doctor's offices, and hospitals or clinics may be closed for extended periods of time as a result of the disaster. You may also have to relocate away from your regular health care providers. Having a larger supply on hand will help in such situations.

Regardless of the amount of medication you keep set aside for emergencies you should periodically (at least yearly) replace it with fresh medications from your daily supply. Your pharmacist can provide advice on the storage of your medications.

In addition to having the actual medications on hand it is helpful to have your medical information written down. The Centers for Disease Control "Keep It With You" (KIWY) program has a personal medical information form that is easy to use, and can be used by medical providers to track your care during an emergency. A copy of this form is available on-line at www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/katrina/kiwy.asp